

7/6/25

Sermon Title: God's Warning to the Remnant of Judah Seeking Refuge in Egypt

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Jeremiah 42:1-22

(Jeremiah 42:1) Then all the army officers, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah son of Hoshai, and all the people from the least to the greatest approached

(Jeremiah 42:2) Jeremiah the prophet said to him, "Please hear our petition and pray to the LORD your God for this entire remnant. For as you now see, though we were once many, now only a few are left.

(Jeremiah 42:3) Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do."

(Jeremiah 42:4) "I have heard you," replied Jeremiah the prophet. "I will certainly pray to the LORD your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the LORD says and will keep nothing back from you."

(Jeremiah 42:5) Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with everything the LORD your God sends you to tell us.

(Jeremiah 42:6) Whether it is favorable or unfavorable, we will obey the LORD our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will obey the LORD our God."

(Jeremiah 42:7) Ten days later the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah.

(Jeremiah 42:8) So he called together Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him and all the people from the least to the greatest.

(Jeremiah 42:9) He said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition, says:

(Jeremiah 42:10) 'If you stay in this land, I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not uproot you, for I have relented concerning the disaster I have inflicted on you.

(Jeremiah 42:11) Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the LORD, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands.

(Jeremiah 42:12) I will show you compassion so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your land.'

(Jeremiah 42:13) "However, if you say, 'We will not stay in this land,' and so disobey the LORD your God,

(Jeremiah 42:14) and if you say, 'No, we will go and live in Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the trumpet or be hungry for bread,'

(Jeremiah 42:15) then hear the word of the LORD, you remnant of Judah. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'If you are determined to go to Egypt and you do go to settle there,

(Jeremiah 42:16) then the sword you fear will overtake you there, and the famine you dread will follow you into Egypt, and there you will die.

(Jeremiah 42:17) Indeed, all who are determined to go to Egypt to settle there will die by the sword, famine and plague; not one of them will survive or escape the disaster I will bring on them.'

(Jeremiah 42:18) This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'As my anger and wrath have been poured out on those who lived in Jerusalem, so will my wrath be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You will be a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach; you will never see this place again.'

(Jeremiah 42:19) "Remnant of Judah, the LORD has told you, 'Do not go to Egypt.' Be sure of this: I warn you today

(Jeremiah 42:20) that you made a fatal mistake when you sent me to the LORD your God and said, 'Pray to the LORD our God for us; tell us everything he says and we will do it.'

(Jeremiah 42:21) I have told you today, but you still have not obeyed the LORD your God in all he sent me to tell you.

(Jeremiah 42:22) So now, be sure of this: You will die by the sword, famine and plague in the place where you want to go to settle.”

As we go through life, we are faced with countless choices, both big and small. Most of them are everyday decisions that have little lasting impact, but some are so significant that they can shape our destiny—and some may even determine life or death.

Now, the remnant left in the land of Judah stands before such a crucial decision. Should they stay and live in the land, or should they flee to Egypt for safety? Their survival depends on the choice they make.

When Ahikam and the military commanders learned that Governor Gedaliah had been murdered, they pursued Ishmael—the one responsible—and successfully rescued the people of Mizpah whom he had taken captive.

Ishmael escaped to the land of the Ammonites.

But the crisis was far from over.

Their immediate concern was survival.

They feared that because Ishmael had killed the Babylonian-appointed governor, King Nebuchadnezzar would retaliate severely.

So, they decided to flee to Egypt.

What Johanan feared was now becoming a reality—those who had remained in Judah were once again facing the threat of destruction.

On their way to Egypt, they stopped to rest at Geruth Kimham, near Bethlehem. There, they approached the prophet Jeremiah and asked him to pray to the Lord on their behalf—to seek God’s guidance about what path they should take and what they should do.

(Jeremiah 42:1) Then all the army officers, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah son of Hoshai, and all the people from the least to the greatest approached

(Jeremiah 42:2) Jeremiah the prophet and said to him, "Please hear our petition and pray to the LORD your God for this entire remnant. For as you now see, though we were once many, now only a few are left.

(Jeremiah 42:3) Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do."

Jeremiah accepted their earnest request and promised to deliver God's word to them without withholding a single thing.

He assured them that he would faithfully convey whatever the Lord revealed.

In response, the people pledged their obedience.

They swore before the Lord that whatever word came from God, they would follow it.

They even confessed that the way of obedience to the Lord is the way of blessing.

(Jeremiah 42:4) "I have heard you," replied Jeremiah the prophet. "I will certainly pray to the LORD your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the LORD says and will keep nothing back from you."

(Jeremiah 42:5) Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with everything the LORD your God sends you to tell us.

(Jeremiah 42:6) Whether it is favorable or unfavorable, we will obey the LORD our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will obey the LORD our God."

Ten days later, the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah then summoned Johanan, the military commanders who were with him, and all the people, and he delivered to them the word of the Lord.

(Jeremiah 42:7) Ten days later the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah.

(Jeremiah 42:8) So he called together Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him and all the people from the least to the greatest.

(Jeremiah 42:9) He said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition, says:

However, the answer they received from God after waiting ten days was not what they expected.

They wanted to go to Egypt, but God told them not to leave the land.

He said, “Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, for I will save you and deliver you from his hand.”

(Jeremiah 42:10) ‘If you stay in this land, I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not uproot you, for I have relented concerning the disaster I have inflicted on you.

(Jeremiah 42:11) Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the LORD, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands.

(Jeremiah 42:12) I will show you compassion so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your land.’

The Lord said that if they settled down and lived in the land, He would build them up and not tear them down, plant them and not uproot them.

This was the same promise He had given to the exiles who were taken to Babylon, proclaiming them as the remnant of His people.

This means that God was offering the same renewal and restoration to those who remained in Judah as He had promised to the exiles in Babylon.

Those who had not been taken into captivity were also given the opportunity to become part of the faithful remnant of God’s people.

It was a chance to receive the blessing they had hoped for when they confessed, “If we obey the voice of the Lord our God, it will be well with us.”

The only difference was that the exiles in Babylon were not given a condition such as, “If you remain in the land.”

This was because they had already obeyed the word of the Lord, given through Jeremiah, to surrender and go into exile in Babylon.

Then the Lord gave a warning about what would happen if they refused to obey His word and chose to go down to Egypt.

(Jeremiah 42:13) “However, if you say, ‘We will not stay in this land,’ and so disobey the LORD your God,

(Jeremiah 42:14) and if you say, ‘No, we will go and live in Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the trumpet or be hungry for bread,’

If they chose to go down to Egypt, the Lord warned that they would die by the sword, famine, and plague.

(Jeremiah 42:15) then hear the word of the LORD, you remnant of Judah. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘If you are determined to go to Egypt and you do go to settle there,

(Jeremiah 42:16) then the sword you fear will overtake you there, and the famine you dread will follow you into Egypt, and there you will die.

(Jeremiah 42:17) Indeed, all who are determined to go to Egypt to settle there will die by the sword, famine and plague; not one of them will survive or escape the disaster I will bring on them.’¹

(Jeremiah 42:18) This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: ‘As my anger and wrath have been poured out on those who lived in Jerusalem, so will my wrath be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You will be a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach; you will never see this place again.’

The reason God so strongly warned them not to go to Egypt was because He, who searches the depths of the human heart, knew that they had already made up their minds to go.

They longed for Egypt, imagining it to be a place of peace, free from war and famine.

But both the fear of Babylon's retaliation and the hope for peace and prosperity in Egypt were nothing more than illusions.

Babylon's ultimate goal was to dominate the entire Near East.

So it was only a matter of time before they invaded Egypt.

How could there be true peace and prosperity there?

Though they fled to Egypt to escape the sword, the sword would pursue them even there.

Though they went seeking abundant food, famine would find them.

Egypt would become their grave.

Moreover, Egypt was the land where their ancestors had lived as slaves for over 430 years.

After the Exodus, God repeatedly warned them not to return there.

To go to Egypt without God's permission was disobedience and unbelief.

On the other hand, the land of Judah—Canaan—was the promised land God had given to their ancestors.

It was not a land to be abandoned, but a land to be rebuilt.

So where should they have remained?

If they chose to go to Egypt, God would pour out His wrath and anger upon them just as He had on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

They would become an object of horror, curse, and disgrace.

Jeremiah was also angered by their hypocrisy.

They had already determined in their hearts to go to Egypt, yet pretended otherwise—asking him to seek God's guidance on their behalf and vowing to obey whatever God said.

In response to their deceitful request, Jeremiah once again clearly warned them: If you do not obey the Lord and go to Egypt, there you will die by the sword, by famine, and by plague.

(Jeremiah 42:19)“Remnant of Judah, the LORD has told you, ‘Do not go to Egypt.’ Be sure of this: I warn you today

(Jeremiah 42:20)that you made a fatal mistake when you sent me to the LORD your God and said, ‘Pray to the LORD our God for us; tell us everything he says and we will do it.’

(Jeremiah 42:21)I have told you today, but you still have not obeyed the LORD your God in all he sent me to tell you.

(Jeremiah 42:22)So now, be sure of this: You will die by the sword, famine and plague in the place where you want to go to settle.”

"The remnant of Judah insisted on going down to Egypt despite Jeremiah’s warning.

They were not truly seeking to know God's will, but only wanted to justify the decision they had already made.

They were indeed ungrateful, hypocritical, and base-hearted people."

Beloved members of Church of God Dreams,

God warned the remnant of Judah of impending judgment.

But that judgment was not fixed or irreversible.

He declared that if they obeyed His word and remained in the land of Judah, the judgment would not be carried out.

More than that, He promised they would enjoy His blessings in the place where they stayed.

However, if they disobeyed His word and went down to Egypt, He said He would carry out the judgment as warned.

He would make them an object of horror, scorn, and curse.

They would perish by the sword, famine, and plague.

God is not only the Creator of this world, but also its Sovereign Ruler.

He holds all authority over this world.

Whether we choose to obey or disobey such a God determines life or death for us.

Even when God's word contradicts our own thoughts, we must obey with faith.

Faith means to trust God to the end, even though we do not see Him.

Obedience means laying down our thoughts and following God's will.

If we live by faith and obey God's word, He will build us up and not tear us down,

He will plant us and not uproot us.

He will bless us.

Just as God proclaimed the exiles in Babylon to be His faithful remnant for their obedience, He will also proclaim us as His faithful remnant, if we live in obedience to His word.